



PROVINCIAL CONTEXT

Number of children 0-12 yrs (2003 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	123,300
1	138,300
2	146,700
3	145,600
4	140,400
5	138,200
6	154,900
7	153,100
8	159,800
9	153,800
10	156,800
11	157,100
12	161,200
Total	1,929,200

Number of children 0-12 years (2003 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	408,300
3-5	424,200
6-12	1,096,700
Total	1,929,200

Children 0-12 yrs with mothers in the paid labour force (2003 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0	69,900
1	80,300
2	86,500
3	88,900
4	83,900
5	85,100
6	93,600
7	97,800
8	104,400
9	102,800
10	107,400
11	112,200
12	112,000
Total	1,224,800

Number of children 0-12 years with mothers in the paid labour force (2003 rounded estimate)

Age	Number of children
0-2	236,700
3-5	257,900
6-12	730,200
Total	1,224,800

Children 0-14 yrs identifying with an Aboriginal group (2001)

Age	North American					Total
	Indian	Metis	Inuit	Multiple	Other	
0-4	13,150	3,385	110	115	400	17,160
5-9	15,070	4,430	125	190	355	20,170
10-14	12,835	4,730	155	160	440	18,320
Total	41,055	12,545	390	465	1,195	55,650

Children 0-14 yrs with disabilities (2001)

Age	Number of children with disabilities	Rate of children with disabilities (%)
0-4	10,700	1.6
5-9	30,500	4.0
10-14	37,140	4.8
Total	78,340	3.5

Note: Total may not add up due to rounding.

Number of children by marital status of families (2001)

Age	Children in couple families	Children in lone parent families	(with lone mothers)	(with lone fathers)
0-4	575,915	92,940	82,045	10,895
5-9	636,310	132,440	114,925	17,510
10-14	636,190	147,055	123,520	23,535
Total	1,848,415	372,435	320,490	51,940

Number of children by mother tongue (2001)

Age	English	French	Non-official language
0-4	529,725	17,515	110,120
5-9	622,295	22,140	116,005
10-14	630,195	25,065	122,795
Total	1,782,215	64,720	348,920

Number of children living in families below the LICO (2002)

Age	Number	Percent (%)
0-2	47,100	12.1
3-5	69,000	16.0
6-12	170,100	15.4
Total	286,200	14.9

Workforce participation of mothers by age of youngest child (2003 rounded estimate)

Age of youngest child	Number of mothers	Participation rate (%)
0-2	233,000	67.8
3-5	181,600	74.1
6-15	601,500	82.8

FAMILY-RELATED LEAVE

Maternity leave

Seventeen weeks to the natural mother only

Parental leave

Thirty-five weeks for birth mothers who took maternity leave; 37 weeks for other parent. Leaves may be taken by both parents consecutively.

Adoption leave

Thirty-seven weeks

Emergency leave

Ten days if employee works for an employer with more than 50 employees

Births and EI maternity and parental claims (2003)

Number of births	128,455
Birth rate per 1,000 population	10.6
Number of initial maternity claims allowed	77,470
Average length of maternity claims	14.5 weeks
Number of parental claims	84,820
Average length of parental claim	23 weeks
Number of adoptive parent claims	990
Average length of adoptive claim	24.3 weeks

Note: Maternity, parental and adoption leaves are determined by provincial and territorial legislation. The federal government pays for up to 15 weeks for maternity leave and 35 weeks for parental and adoptive leave for eligible parents at 55% of earned income to a maximum of \$413/week. See federal ECEC programs for more information.

KINDERGARTEN

LEGISLATION

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2

Section 16 of the *Education Act* is specific to private schools.

Ontario funds and delivers denominational education. Both “public” and Catholic school boards are publicly funded.

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

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KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

School boards provide kindergarten programs for five year olds (senior kindergarten–SK), usually part-time. All but one local school board provides junior kindergarten (JK) programs for four year olds, also usually part-time. Kindergarten and junior kindergarten are offered full-day every day by the 12 francophone school boards as well as by some Catholic boards.

Junior and senior kindergarten is delivered in publicly funded elementary schools. The organization and delivery of the program is the responsibility of the local school board. Neither JK nor SK is compulsory; however, most four and five year olds attend.

In some schools there are combined SK and JK classes where enrolment does not support a teacher for separate classes or where the school chooses to combine them.

Programs may be

- Part-day, every day
- Full-day, alternate day
- Full-day, every day

The *Education Act* does not define instructional hours for JK-K. School boards decide on the normal schedule.

Private schools in Ontario may operate programs for four or five year olds (and for younger children as well). These may or may not be licensed under the Day Nurseries Act. There are no Ministry of Education requirements for curriculum or teacher qualifications. Presently there are 775 elementary and secondary private schools in Ontario. The Ministry of Education does not routinely maintain statistics related to private schools.

CLASS SIZE

There is no maximum class size for kindergarten; however, there is a board-wide maximum average class size of 24 for JK to Grade 3. The provincial average class size in 2000/01 for JK to Grade 3 was 22.2. Updated information for 2003/04 is not available. The province is working toward a maximum class size of 20. (See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN KINDERGARTEN)

AGE ELIGIBILITY

Junior kindergarten: Four years old by December 31

Senior kindergarten: Five years old by December 31

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The *Education Act* requires that all publicly funded school boards provide special education programs and services to students who have been identified as exceptional. This requirement extends to all enrolled pupils. Inclusion is not specified.

Number of kindergarten children with special needs: Information not available

ENROLMENT (2002/03)

Number of children enrolled in senior kindergarten (the year before Grade 1): 129,993

Number of children enrolled in junior kindergarten (two years before Grade 1): 116,194

Information on full- and part-day enrolment is not available.

Note: 2003/04 enrolment information is not available.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Qualification requirements: A valid Ontario Teacher's Certificate (undergraduate degree plus one year of teacher training and successful writing of the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test).

Responsibility for certification: Ontario College of Teachers

Representation: Kindergarten teachers are represented by one of three unions: The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) and L'association des enseignants et des enseignantes francophones de l'Ontario (AEFO).

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Title: Teaching Assistant

There is no provincial policy on teaching assistants; school boards set the criteria for hiring them. The funding formula provides for teaching assistants relative to overall student enrolment. School boards decide on the number of teaching assistants to be employed by the board for the purposes of the JK/SK programs depending on local priorities and local decisions concerning allocation of resources.

Qualifications and wages: Information not available

CURRICULUM

A provincial curriculum is outlined in The Kindergarten Program (1998). It is "designed to help children broaden their base of information, form concepts, acquire foundation skills and positive attitudes to learning, and begin to develop their abilities and talents in a wide range of areas. It is also designed to prepare children for the new Ontario curriculum for Grades 1 to 8". The document "identifies a variety of learning expectations. Among these are expectations related to children's development of literacy (including technological and computer literacy) and of knowledge and skills in mathematics and science".

SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR KINDERGARTEN

Combination of provincial grants and local property taxes.¹

The Ministry of Finance sets the education property tax rate. Taxes are collected by municipalities and forwarded to school boards.

There is no provincial government funding for independent (private) schools.

SPENDING ON KINDERGARTEN (2003/04)

Estimate per pupil (FTE) amount

JK: \$3,800 (part-day rate)

SK: \$3,800 (part-day rate)

Total provincial spending on junior kindergarten

Approximately \$440 million

Total provincial spending on senior kindergarten

Approximately \$496 million

¹ Source: Canadian School Board Association. *Education Governance in Canada: Trends and Implications*. Last updated 1999.

Spending includes capital funding, operational funding for administration, transportation, special education, ESL and other areas. Some special purpose grants such as the Learning Opportunities Grant and the Language Grant provide additional funding to boards with a high proportion of Aboriginal students.

SPECIAL FEATURES

It is up to the individual school board to determine additional policies or resources regarding ESL or inner-city kindergarten students.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN KINDERGARTEN

In 2004/05 the government has made a commitment to put a cap of 20 students per class for primary (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3) classes. As a first step, the government is investing \$90 million in primary class size reduction in 2004/05. This is an interim measure to allow boards to reduce class size with no requirement to achieve a primary class size cap until 2007/08.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

LEGISLATION

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *The Day Nurseries Act*. Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990 (reprinted 1998). Amended by *The Services Improvement Act* effective January 1, 1998, c. D-2 Amended by: 1997, c. 30, Sched. C; 1999, c. 12, Sched. E, s. 2; 1999, c. 12, Sched. G, s. 21; O. Reg. 500/00; 2001, c. 13, s. 14.

Ontario. Legislative Assembly. *Ontario Regulation 262*, 1990. (Amended 1998, 1999)

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

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CHILD CARE SERVICES

UNREGULATED CHILD CARE²

Unregulated family child care

Maximum number of children permitted: Five. This does not include the caregiver's own children.

Family resource centres

Resource centres provide support services to parents and regulated and unregulated care providers. The range of services can include: drop-in programs, resource lending libraries, playgroups, training opportunities and educational workshops.

REGULATED CHILD CARE

Day nurseries (child care centres, nursery schools, before- and after-school programs)

Group care for less than 24 hours/day for five or more unrelated children under 12 years, and under 18 years for children with a developmental disability.

Supervised private home day care (family child care)

Care for up to five children from 0-12 years old in a private home that is supervised by a licensed agency. Not more than two children may be under two years, and not more than three children may be under three years; these numbers include the caregiver's children less than six years. If the caregiver's children are under six, she/he may also care for two children age 6-12 years. For example, if a caregiver's children are ages three and four, then she/he may provide care for up to two more children between the ages of 6 and 12.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Ontario does not have a written policy regarding children with special needs but encourages integration and inclusion of children with special needs into community child care services. Special needs resourcing provides assistance for staffing, equipment, supplies or services to support the inclusion of children with special needs in child care.

² In addition, some unregulated recreation programs provide subsidized child care for school-aged children.

Resource teachers generally work for agencies that provide a variety of services for children with special needs, and may serve children in several child care settings. The level of service per child can vary depending on the child's needs, the local service model, and available resources. Consequently, the previous ratio of one resource teacher to four children with special needs is no longer applicable in all areas. A resource teacher must hold a diploma in early childhood education or academic equivalent and have completed a post-secondary school program related to children with special needs. If working with children with multiple disabilities, the resource teacher must also have a current standard certificate in first aid.

There are no training or experience requirements for staff other than resource teachers who are working with children with special needs.

ABORIGINAL CHILD CARE

Ontario funds and regulates on-reserve child care.

As of March 2004, there were 64³ licensed child care centres on-reserve with a licensed capacity of 2,513. There were also two licensed private-home day care agencies with 36 homes on-reserve.

Ontario cost-shares fee subsidies for licensed on-reserve child care programs on an 80/20 basis with First Nations, and the province pays 100% of other child care financing (wage subsidies, special needs resourcing and family resource centres). First Nations manage the fee subsidy system in their communities. Ontario recovers the majority of expenditures on fee subsidies through the federal government under the 1965 Memorandum of Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians.

SPACE STATISTICS (2003/04)

Number of regulated child care spaces

Infants (0-18 mos)	5,981
Toddlers (18-30 mos)	18,877
Preschool (2.5-5 yrs)	86,163
JK (3yrs 8 mos)	6,355
SK (4yrs 8 mos)	6,916
School-age (6-12 yrs)	62,613
Private home day care	19,838
Total (estimate)	⁴ 206,743

Note: Breakdowns of full- and part-time centre-based child care are not available by age.

Children receiving special needs resourcing in regulated child care

Note: Figures comparable to the other provinces/territories – that is the number of children at a given point in time – are not available.

A cumulative total of 21,305 children were served throughout the fiscal year.

Number of children in regulated child care receiving subsidies

Regular fee subsidies:	89,787
	<i>(Cumulative total throughout the fiscal year)</i>
Ontario Works funding for licensed care	14,033
	<i>(Cumulative total throughout the fiscal year)</i>
Total	103,820
	<i>(Cumulative total throughout the fiscal year)</i>

Note: Figures comparable to the other provinces/territories – that is the number of children at a given point in time – are not available.

An additional 712 school-age children received regular fee subsidies for approved (unregulated) school-age recreation programs and an additional 11,387 received Ontario Works funding for unregulated care.

3 Please note that in the previous version of this publication, ECEC in Canada 2001 (2002), the number of on-reserve child care centres was reported as 86 (September 2002). Updated information from Ontario is that as of December 31, 2002, there were 67 licensed First Nations child care centres on-reserve with a licensed capacity of 2,722 spaces and two licensed private home day care agencies with 36 homes.

4 The total figure may not be comparable to that for previous versions of this publication (1998 and 2001), as officials at those times could not determine whether family child care was included in age breakdowns.

Number of centres and homes

Number of child care centres:	3,874
- Full day	2,321
- Part-day nursery schools/preschools	1,825
- Stand-alone school-age programs	1,582

Note: Child care centres may be licensed to offer more than one program (e.g., a before-and-after school program for school-age children and a full-day program for preschool-age children). As a result, a number of individual centres will appear in more than one category above. As well, there may be overlap between the age groups served in the various program types. This means that before-and-after-school programs may serve children other than school-age children (e.g., JK, SK, preschool). It also means that programs exclusively serving school-age children may be listed as full-day, half-day or before-and-after-school.

Number of family child care providers	7,765
Number of family child care agencies	140

Openings and Closings

New child care centre licenses issued	349
Number of child care centre closures	256
Number of new licenses issued to family child care agencies	8
Number of family child care agencies who ceased providing care	5

Sponsorship of regulated centre spaces

Not-for-profit*	146,786
For-profit	40,345

**This includes municipally-operated centres. Current figures are not available for the number of municipally-operated child care spaces. In 1998, however, 18,143 of the non-profit spaces were municipal.*

Sponsorship of regulated private-home day care agencies

	Agencies	Homes
Non-profit	123	7,343
For-profit	17	422
Total	140	7,765

This includes municipally-operated family child care agencies and homes. See previous note.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS**REGULATED CENTRES**

Maximum centre size	Not specified
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Maximum staff:child ratios and group sizes

Age	Staff:child ratios	Max. group sizes
0-18 mos	3:10	10
18 mos-2 yrs	1:5	15
2-5 yrs	1:8	16
3 yrs 8 mos-5yrs	1:10	20 (with Director's* approval)
5-6 yrs	1:12	24
6-10 yrs	1:15	30

**Director is an employee of the Ministry appointed by the Minister as a Director for the purposes of the Day Nurseries Act.*

Staff qualification requirements

Centre supervisors must have a two year diploma in early childhood education from an approved College of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) or the equivalent and at least two years experience working in a day nursery with children who are of the same age and developmental level as the children in the day nursery where the supervisor is employed.

One staff person with each group of children must have a two year early childhood education diploma from a CAAT or the equivalent.

A Ministry Director has the authority to waive the educational requirements for directors and other staff in a specific program.

Parent involvement

Each centre and family child care agency must have a written statement regarding parent involvement. The type of parental involvement is not specified.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

Ministry Program Advisors based in Regional Offices license, monitor and enforce the Day Nurseries Act and its Regulations.

Program Advisors are not required to have training in early childhood education.

The annual license renewal process includes an inspection of the child care facility to ensure compliance with the regulatory standards. Unannounced drop-in visits are also conducted. Noncompliance with the legislation that does not pose an immediate threat to the children's well-being may result in a provisional license with a time frame in which the operator is required to correct the noncompliance. Repeated noncompliance of a serious nature or noncompliance that poses a likely danger to the children may result in a refusal to renew or a revocation of the license. However, the provincial Director of the child care branch must give notice of intent to close the centre to the operator who then has the right to appeal to the License Appeal Tribunal. The legislation provides the authority for immediate closure in the situation of immediate danger to the children's well-being.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

In Ontario, family child care has historically been referred to as "private home day care" in provincial legislation. The terms "home child care" or "family child care" are also used.

Regulation

The Ministry licenses family child care agencies which then enter into agreements with caregivers to provide child care. The agencies provide supervision as specified in the regulations.

Maximum capacity

Care for up to five children from 0-12 years. Not more than two of the children may be under two years, and not more than three of the children may be under three years, including the caregiver's own children less than six years. Not more than two may be children with special needs. Only one child with special needs may be cared for if there is one other child under two years of age or two children over two years of age.

If the caregiver's own children are under six years, then she/he may care for two children age 6-12 years. For example, if a caregiver's children are ages three and four, then she/he may provide care for up to two more children between the ages of 6 and 12.

Provider qualification requirements

No caregiver training qualifications are specified in provincial regulations. Regulation requires caregivers to be older than 18 years and, if working with children with special needs, to hold a standard first-aid certificate. Many agencies provide training for caregivers.

Caregivers are supervised by agency staff, called home visitors, who are required to have completed a post-secondary program in child development or family studies, and to have at least two years experience working with children who are of the same age and developmental levels as the children cared for by the agency where the person is employed.

Licensing, monitoring and enforcement

The agency home visitor is required to conduct quarterly in-home supervisory visits. The agency is responsible for ensuring that legislated requirements are met.

As part of agency licensing inspection, provincial program advisors may inspect homes to ensure that the agency is in compliance with the Day Nurseries Act and Regulations.

FUNDING

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE

Fee subsidies are paid directly to non-profit and for-profit service providers on behalf of eligible parents. In Ontario, 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSAB) (these are usually municipal or regional governments) and Native Bands administer the fee subsidy program. These pay at least 20% of the approved cost of fee subsidies.

Eligibility is determined by a provincial needs test with income being only one of a number of items considered. Each municipality can determine the rates within a range, a situation which creates considerable variation across the province. There are no province-wide maximum income levels for full or partial fee subsidies.

The province does not set maximum subsidy levels. The maximum subsidy varies across the province and is at the discretion of the local government (CMSM or DSSAB).

There is no provincial minimum user fee.

The provincial government permits subsidization up to the full cost of the program. However, in practice, municipalities set maximum subsidy rates.

Municipalities may allocate a specified number of subsidized spaces to particular programs or may allow them to float.

There is a province-wide cap on the total subsidy budget rather than on the number of subsidized spaces available. Lengthy waiting lists of parents eligible for subsidies exist in some communities but some do not maintain waiting lists.

Fee subsidies for all children, including those with special needs, are determined on the basis of 80% contribution by the provincial government and 20% contribution by local governments.

Special needs resourcing is split 80/20 between the province and municipalities. The province does not require that parents of children with special needs be needs tested for fee subsidy eligibility but some municipalities have imposed a needs test.

Average net income of families receiving child care subsidies

Information not available. (In Ontario, income is only one factor in determining subsidy eligibility).

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2003/04)

Wage subsidy funding may be paid to full- and part-time permanent staff in:

- non-profit and for-profit licensed child care centres;
- non-profit and for-profit private home day care agencies;
- non-profit special needs resourcing agencies; and
- non-profit family resource centres.

Normally, one-time only funds are not available.

PROVINCIAL EXPENDITURES FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE (2003/04)

Fee subsidies

Regular fee subsidies \$279,200,000
Ontario Works subsidies for regulated care* \$26,600,000

**Note that this category was not included in the 2001 data for Ontario as the breakdown of Ontario Works subsidies for regulated and unregulated child care was not available.*

One-time funding

Repairs and maintenance (only in 2003/04) \$9,700,000
(See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS for details)

Recurring funding

Wage subsidies**	\$135,100,000
Special needs resourcing	46,800,000
Total**	\$497,400,000

*** Includes wage subsidy funding (\$114.8M), Broader Public Sector pay equity funding (\$2.4M) and pay equity funding for eligible non-profit child care services providers as per Memorandum of Settlement (\$17.9M) (See RECENT DEVELOPMENTS for details).*

Other

Family resource centres***	\$8,100,000
Ontario Works child care (unregulated care)	\$6,800,000

****Reflects realignment of \$12M from family resource centres to Ontario Early Years Centres*

SALARIES

Ontario does not collect wage information.

Mean gross hourly wage for centre-based child care staff (full and part-time staff combined) (1998)

Assistant teachers	\$10.60
Teachers	13.48
Teacher-directors	17.48
Administrative directors	22.00

Source: You Bet I Care! More recent information not available.

FEES

Ontario does not collect fee information.

Median monthly parent fees for full-time centre-based care (1998)

Infants (Age 1-17 mos)	\$783
Toddlers (Age 18 mos. - 3 yrs)	603
Preschool (Age 3 - 5.11 yrs)	541
School-age	Not available

Source: You Bet I Care! More recent information not available.

Average daily fee in family child care

Information not available

ADMINISTRATION

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is responsible for developing policy and legislation, coordinating planning, licensing programs and ensuring compliance with the regulations.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is a decentralized ministry. Licensing and monitoring of programs is the responsibility of nine Regional Offices. The Early Years Programs Branch is responsible for policy and legislation development.

Administration of all funds has become the responsibility of municipal governments (see section following).

MUNICIPAL OR OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE

Responsibility for managing delivery of child care services lies with 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). (These are usually municipal or regional governments.)

The transfer of responsibility was completed on January 1, 2000 and was authorized by amendments to the *Day Nurseries Act*.

This change meant that 20% of funding for wage subsidies, resource centres and special needs resourcing is paid by local governments, whereas 100% of these funds were previously paid by the provincial government.

In addition, Ontario municipal governments operate regulated child care, a role they have played since the time of World War II.

Beginning in 1992, school boards also were authorized to operate child care services; however, very few do so.

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), in operation since 1950, works to “build members’ (municipal governments and non-profit social service organizations) capacity to plan, manage and deliver quality human services in their communities”.

CHILD CARE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Beginning in 2000, the provincial government requires local governments to develop local service plans, including service targets and levels, according to provincial guidelines on local service planning. Although these are three year service plans, Regional Offices review them on an annual basis.

OTHER ECEC SERVICES

Early Years Centres

The Ontario Early Years Centres were implemented in two phases: 42 Centres opened in 2002 (Phase 1), and 61 Centres opened in 2003 (Phase 2), for a total of 103 Centres (one in each provincial riding).

They offer a common set of programs and services for children and parents/caregivers including:

- Early learning activities for children, such as literacy and numeracy;
- Parent resources, information and training on topics such as healthy child development;
- Pre- and post-natal resources, information and training;
- Outreach to encourage parent participation;
- Volunteer co-ordination and speakers bureau;
- Monitoring program effectiveness and tracking community progress in improving child development outcomes; and
- Information about and linkages to services external to the Centre.

Ontario Works child care

Ontario Works child care funds may be used to cover the cost of regulated child care as a transition measure where participants are in employment assistance activities or are entering the paid labour market; or payment for unregulated child care arrangements or alternatives to child care (e.g., summer camp, supervised homework programs, recreation programs) up to established maximums.

Whether the payment goes to the parent or to a service provider is determined by each CMSM/DSSAB.

Learning, Earning and Parenting is a program within Ontario Works which supports young parents on social assistance and includes high school, parenting courses, career counseling, job preparation and child care.

HISTORY OF CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

1881 Establishment of The Crèche in Toronto.

1883 Establishment of Canada’s first public kindergarten by the Toronto Board of Education.

1887 Kindergarten for three to five year olds was recognized in the Education Act.

1926 Establishment of the University of Toronto’s Institute of Child Study and its laboratory school, St. George’s Nursery, to train nursery school teachers.

1942 Ontario was one of two provinces to sign the Dominion-Provincial War-Time Agreement with the federal government, enabling 50% cost-sharing for nurseries for children whose mothers were employed in essential war industries. The Day Nurseries Branch was established to administer funding and to support the development of new nurseries.

1945 Twenty-eight day nurseries in Ontario serviced 900 preschool children in 44 “school units” which served approximately 2,500 children. At the end of the War, federal funding was withdrawn and the province threatened to close all centres.

1946 The Day Nursery and Day Care Parents’ Association in Toronto successfully lobbied to keep the day nurseries open.

The Day Nurseries Act was passed, providing provincial funds to cover 50% of net operating costs of child care programs and a system of licensing and regular inspection for centres. It provided Canada’s first child care regulation.

1950 The Nursery Education Association of Ontario (now the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario) was established.

1950s Kindergarten for four year olds was introduced in Toronto as a transition to school for immigrant children.

1966 The introduction of the federal Canada Assistance Plan resulted in the provision of fee subsidies in Ontario for low-income families.

1974 Ontario’s first major policy statement on child care called it a welfare service for those in social/financial need.

The Day Care Reform Action Alliance successfully fought the Birch Proposals, the provincial government’s proposed reduction in staff/child ratios and other standards to reduce costs.

1978 *The Day Nurseries Act* was amended to require licensing of private home day care agencies. The Regulation was amended in 1984 to provide requirements for private home day care.

1980 The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care (later Child Care) formed to advocate for public funding for universally accessible, high quality, non-profit child care.

1987 In *New Directions for Day Care*, a Liberal government promised a “comprehensive policy that recognizes child care as a basic public service, not a welfare service”. A three year plan to provide additional funds to expand non-profit child care programs was announced. In the next few years, there was considerable expansion of non-profit child care, a Direct Operating Grant directed primarily to wages and to non-profit programs was introduced and policy work on flexible hours and rural child care was undertaken. A policy to include space for child care in all new schools was announced. Provincial pay equity legislation was proclaimed but did not include child care staff in centres where no male comparator was available.

1991 An NDP government made two announcements that reflected its intention to establish growth in the non-profit sector: a Wage Enhancement Grant for workers in non-profit care as a “down payment” on including child care staff in pay equity and a strategy to encourage commercial programs to convert to non-profit status.

1992 The provincial government released *Child Care Reform in Ontario: Setting the Stage*, which stated four basic principles as the basis for child care reform: quality, affordability, accessibility, and sound management. The consultation paper promised dramatic reform of child care in Ontario with the goal of making high quality child care accessible to every family. New legislation was to be developed by the end of 1994.

The provincial government also released the Ontario Child Care Management Framework, establishing a context for the development of new programs and changes to existing programs.

School boards were granted eligibility to hold licenses to operate child care programs.

As part of the Jobs Ontario Training Fund, 8,200 child care subsidies, fully funded by the province, were targeted to assist unemployed parents looking for work or participating in job training programs.

1994 The report of The Royal Commission on Learning recommended introduction of early childhood education programs for all three, four and five year olds as part of the education system.

Pay equity for child care staff was introduced through the “proxy method”; funds for non-profit programs to comply were to be provided by the provincial government.

1995 The provincial government announced a major pilot project, the Early Years Program, the first step toward a “seamless day” for four and five year olds. School boards were asked to submit proposals for pilot status.

June 1995 A Conservative government was elected. Their platform, the Common Sense Revolution, promised to change the direction in child care made during the two previous (Liberal and NDP) governments.

Before the end of 1995, the following changes were made:

- the proxy fund for pay equity for staff in non-profit child care centres was capped
- the Program Development Fund (start-up and minor capital) was eliminated
- major capital funding was cancelled
- funding that supported inclusion of child care facilities in new school sites was cancelled
- the Conversion (to non-profit) Program was cancelled
- the Early Years Program (to pilot a “seamless day” for four and five year olds) was cancelled
- the policy limiting new subsidies to non-profit programs was cancelled
- Jobs Ontario subsidies (fully-funded by the province) changed to 80-20% provincial-municipal cost-sharing.

1996 The proxy mechanism that allowed child care staff to benefit from the *Pay Equity Act* was eliminated.

A review of the child care program was conducted by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children’s Services. The Ministry produced *Improving Child Care in Ontario* in September 1996. Its proposals included:

- reduction of Wage Subsidy for staff in non-profit centres and resource centres
- minor capital (50/50 cost-shared) which included for-profit child care for the first time
- less frequent monitoring
- an increase in the preschool staff/child ratio
- an increase in the number of school-aged children permitted in regulated family day care
- a change in cost-sharing 87/13 to 80/20 for special needs children
- introduction of user fees in resource centres

Note: Not all of these proposals were implemented.

1998 The government made amendments to the *Day Nurseries Act* through the *Services Improvement Act* outlining how delivery and additional funding responsibility for child care services would be transferred to local governments. Previously, 20% of municipal funding had been discretionary and was limited to fee subsidies with the provincial government paying for 100% of the other items.

The government announced its intent to transfer licensing to the local level. However, the authority for licensing was not included in the *Services Improvement Act* and no date for transfer was set.

The Ministry in collaboration with municipalities began developing a child care information system, the Child Care Data Warehouse, for local program delivery and for centralized performance-related data collection.

A Workplace Tax Incentive was introduced to encourage businesses in building and renovating onsite and community-based child care facilities. Corporations may receive a tax deduction of 30% of qualifying expenditures and unincorporated businesses may receive a 5% refundable tax credit.

A new funding formula for Ontario education was introduced. The new funding formula meant that school boards experienced shortfalls leading to new rent and other charges for early childhood services, as well as withdrawal of school board support for services considered not to be “education” as defined by the *Education Act*. The shortfalls, calculated to be massive in some boards, meant that schools would be closed and consolidated. Accurate statistics were not available but it was estimated that as many as a third to a half of Ontario child care centres were located in school space. Previous provincial governments pursued a policy, introduced in the late 1980s and ended in 1995, of locating child care centres in all new schools.

The Child Care Supplement for Working Families was established. It used funds made available through the National Child Benefit initiative, and additional provincial funds, to provide financial assistance to low- and modest-income families with children under the age of seven. Eligible families included those with earned income of at least \$5,000, or eligible child care expenses. This included families where both parents were working or in school/training, single parents who were working or attending school/training and working families with one parent at home. The maximum annual benefit per child was raised to \$1,100 per child in 1999 from \$1,020 per child in 1998.

A national study of wages, working conditions and quality, *You Bet I Care!*, found that – based on a sample of full-time centres for children 0-6 years and regulated family child care – Ontario scored 4.9 on the ECERS-R (preschool rooms), 4.1 on the ITERS (infant rooms), and 3.9 on the FDCRS (family child care). The scale ranges from 1-7 (excellent).

1999 The proxy mechanism that allowed child care staff to benefit from the *Pay Equity Act*, eliminated in 1996, was reinstated following a court challenge by the Equal Pay Coalition. Retroactive payments were made to eligible non-profit child care programs as a lump sum pay equity adjustment sent out in early 1999.

The government discontinued dedicated funding for proxy pay equity, and rolled its existing commitment into the base budgets of eligible transfer payment agencies.

Report of the *Early Years Study*, commissioned by the provincial government and led by Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Hon. Margaret McCain, was released. It concluded that the development in the first six years of a child's life sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health. It recommended the establishment of Early Childhood Development and Parenting Centres that are “accessible, affordable and optional for all children and families in Ontario from conception to entry into Grade 1 in the school system”. It further recommended that these become available for all children within five years, by 2004.

A Task Group was appointed “to advise the government on key elements and standards for an Early Years Program”.

The Early Years Challenge Fund, a matching fund that challenges businesses, volunteer and charitable groups to “help communities promote early childhood development and parenting programs” was announced.

A study by KPMG, a consulting firm, found the shortage of child care spaces to be a major obstacle to people obtaining a job under Ontario Works, the provincial workfare program.

2000 In September, the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services amended the regulation under the *Day Nurseries Act* to allow child care fee subsidies to flow to parents in need with children ages 6-12 (up to age 18 for children with special needs) enrolled in unregulated recreation programs. These would have purchase of service agreements with the local government or authority.

In November, the provincial government launched Ontario's Promise, a program to promote public/private partnerships and volunteers in fulfilling five “promises to children”. Ontario's Promise was based on an American program called America's Promise.

A Minister's policy statement on eligible hours of care was issued. It required that child care fee subsidies and Ontario Works child care assistance be used only for these periods when child care is actually required for parents to work or attend school.

The provincial Education Improvement Commission (Ministry of Education) proposed full-day kindergarten for four and five year olds and expanding regulated child care for younger children, rather than cash payments to parents.

2001 The provincial government launched its Early Years Plan for children 0-6 which “fulfilled the new way of thinking outlined in the Mustard-McCain study”.

Ontario received \$114 million for the first year from the federal/provincial Early Childhood Development Initiative. Of the \$114 million, \$30 million was announced to establish Early Years Centres across Ontario, places where “parents can go to find the answers to questions they have about their children.” There was one per provincial riding. In addition, funds were earmarked for the Early Years Challenge Fund, pregnant women with addictions, Community Health Centres, sexual assault services, autism, children's mental health, to teen parent programming, Program Effectiveness Management, Injury and Family Abuse Prevention, and others. None of the money was spent on “early learning and care” in Ontario.

The provincial government tightened eligibility criteria for subsidized child care; hardest hit were student parents. In December, the Provincial Auditor's Report on education stated that school boards in Ontario were spending \$95 million more than they received from the government on special education services.

Five unions challenged the government's decision not to finance proxy pay equity under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, arguing that the lack of dedicated funding for proxy pay equity was discriminatory.

2001/02 The government invested some of the federal government's Early Childhood Development funding in the creation of 103 Ontario Early Years Centres. The majority of the then-226 child care resource centres receiving ministry funding either became an Ontario Early Years Centre, dissolved and came under the governance of an Ontario Early Years Centre, or established a purchase-of-service agreement with an Ontario Early Years Centre, while a few closed.

2002 In August, Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Hon. Margaret McCain released their follow-up report, *The Early Years Study – Three Years Later*. This report stated that the Ontario government had not responded to the recommendations from their previous 1999 report. It noted the failure to support child care as part of the Early Years strategy.

The provincial government appointed a Task Force headed by Mordechai Rozanski to review the education funding formula.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD CARE AND OTHER ECEC SERVICES

March 2003 The Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care was released by federal, provincial, and territorial social services ministers for regulated early learning and child care programs for children under the age of six. Ontario's share for 2003/04 was to be \$9.7 million and \$58.2 million in 2004/05.

April 2003 A Memorandum of Settlement was reached between the province and five unions to provide provincial funding to eligible service providers and organizations – including child care programs – with outstanding and ongoing proxy pay equity obligations. (See 2000 for background.) The settlement provides both base and one-time funding for eligible child care organizations with current proxy pay equity wage adjustment liabilities between January 1, 1999 and March 31, 2006 (funds flow to municipalities).

October 2003 In a provincial election, a Liberal government was elected. Its platform for child care – called “Best Start” – has long-term goals of a universal regulated child care system as a “seamless extension of our public education system” and committed \$300 million in new provincial dollars.

The Ministry of Children's Services was established. (The name was then changed to Ministry of Children and Youth Services in March 2004.) The new ministry became fully operational on April 1, 2004. It now has responsibility for children's programs that were formerly under the Ministry of Community and Social Services (e.g., child care, early years, children's mental health, child welfare, special needs, etc.), youth justice services formerly under the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and some services formerly under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (e.g., early years, children's treatment centres, etc.).

January 2004 \$9.7 million federal dollars from the Multilateral Framework agreement was directed on a one-time basis to regulated, non-profit child care centres and private home day care agencies for capital improvements and repairs/maintenance through the purchase of furnishings and equipment.

July 2004 The government announced that the \$58.2 million in 2004/05 federal Early Learning and Child Care funds through the Multilateral Framework Agreement would be used to create up to an additional 4,000 new subsidized child care spaces with a priority on preschool-aged children, and to further stabilize the regulated child care system.

November 2004 The government announced its Best Start Strategy. Under Best Start, there will be expansion of child care during non-school hours for children enrolled in junior and senior kindergarten. Ontario's long-term vision, to be delivered over the next 10 to 15 years, is to extend wrap-around child care programs, first to four and five year olds, and then to children aged 2.5 – four years for whom a full-day made up of universal part-day preschool with wrap-around full-day child care will be developed. Schools will be a preferred site for these child care programs and the subsidy system will be revamped.

Other child care components of Best Start include:

- Panel on Early Learning Curriculum
- Panel on Quality and Human Resources
- Establishment of a College of Early Childhood Educators
- Flexibility in eligibility requirements for child care fee subsidies
- Review of child care financing

The government also announced the following changes to child care fee subsidies (these took effect December 1, 2004): Municipalities will once again be able to include social need, study/preparation time in relation to education or training for parents, and other parental needs beyond participation in activities (e.g., illness/disability, and other special circumstances). In addition, Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) and Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) will once again not be considered liquid assets under the needs test for child care fee subsidies, and families will be able to claim contributions as allowable expenditures when determining how much they are able to contribute to the cost of child care. These changes reversed changes made to child care by the Harris government.

■ KEY PROVINCIAL ECEC ORGANIZATIONS

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

726 Bloor Street West, Suite 209

Toronto, ON M6G 4A1

Telephone: 416-538-0628

Facsimile: 416-538-6737

Website: www.childcareontario.org

Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario

40 Orchard View Blvd., Suite 211

Toronto, ON M4R 2G1

Telephone: 416-487-3157

Facsimile: 416-487-3758

Website: <http://www.cfc-efc.ca/aeceo/index.html>

Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario

Administrative Office

331 Dufferin Avenue

Belleville, ON K8N 3X6

Telephone: 705-733-2052 or 1-800-567-7075

Facsimile: 1-800-567-7075

TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

480 University Ave., Ste.1000

Toronto, ON M5G 1V2

Telephone: 416-962-3836

Facsimile: 416-642-2424

Website: www.etfo.ca

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

65 St. Clair Ave. E., Suite 400

Toronto, ON M4T 2Y8

Telephone: 416-925-2493

Facsimile: 416-925-7764

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Ontario Teachers' Federation

1300 Yonge Street, Suite 200

Toronto, ON M4T 1X3

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